

Masthead Logo

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# Birdbrain

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## Five Poems · *Michael Carey*

### BIRDBRAIN

*for Max Garland*

I have a friend  
who says he was hatched  
by a chicken  
and I believe him.

Some say  
his grandfather  
just told him that  
because he didn't know  
about storks and all  
the poor boy did  
was talk to birds  
in the straw  
of the crazy coop  
his grandfather  
had fashioned  
from rotting wood and  
other people's garbage.

He says the eggs  
were always warm  
when he picked them.  
He always cried  
and told the hens  
he was sorry  
for the fragile hearts  
beating in his hands.

He says the chickens  
know more than we do  
about crickets and worms  
and the weather. They  
never drown in the rain  
by keeping their mouths open.  
They are simply offering  
their bodies to God  
and, sometimes, He takes them.  
At least, He takes their  
small feathery souls  
above all that man  
has slaughtered,  
rising, like the dew  
after a hot rain,  
to their small  
ignorant heaven.

## FROZEN HARVEST

A sudden cold  
shakes the timber. Iced  
branches fall along the  
driveway like Grandpa's hair.  
After a wet spring  
  
comes a wet harvest.  
Nearly Christmas and the bins  
stay hungry for grain.  
At last, the ground will hold us.  
Soon, the combine will slide  
down the rows like a fat  
  
and aged dancer. This  
is the dream we keep having.  
The banker smiling. Father  
restful in his sleep. But